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# Character Biography

## Angrod

By Oshun

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**Author's Note:** As the number of character biographies increases on this site, the authors of said biographies encounter an ever greater likelihood of repeating themselves. One presumes that each biography should stand alone and contain all of the minimum information necessary to identify the character. It is also true that in the cases of many characters, their family members and many events of their lives are shared. With the addition of this latest biography of Angrod, yet another member of the Golden House of Finarfin, I would like to refer the readers to related other SWG reference articles for additional information, in particular, the [Character Biography of Aegnor](#), the [Character Biography of Finrod Felagund](#), and Dawn Felagund's essay [The Accidental King: Five Reasons Why Finarfin Deserves More Appreciation](#).

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*The Index of Names* in the published *Silmarillion* states that Angrod is the "[t]he third son of Finarfin, who with his brother Aegnor held the northern slopes of Dorthonion; slain in the Dagor Bragollach" (1). This assignment of birth order for Angrod is based upon the assumption in the published *Silmarillion* that the sons of Finarfin and Eärwen include Orodreth. In charting the course of what Christopher Tolkien refers to as "the curious history of Orodreth" (2), we discover that Angrod might have been the second son of Finarfin rather than the third, that Tolkien had decided at one point to describe Orodreth as Angrod's son instead of his older brother, and thus Angrod might then have become the grandfather of Gil-galad rather than his cousin (or would that have been half-cousin once removed?). It is best perhaps to save that entire complicated discussion for the biography of Orodreth. In *The Shibboleth of Fëanor*, Christopher Tolkien notes that

The name of Angrod's son (still retaining the identity of 'Orodreth') was then changed from *Artanáro* to *Artaresto*. In an isolated note found with the genealogies, scribbled at great speed but nonetheless dated, August 1965, my father suggested that the best solution to the problem of Gil-galad's parentage was to find him in 'the son of Orodreth', who is here given the Quenya name of *Artaresto*, and continued:

Finrod left his wife in Valinor and had no children in exile. Angrod's son was Artaresto, who was beloved by Finrod and escaped when Angrod was slain, and dwelt with Finrod. Finrod made him his 'steward' and he succeeded him in Nargothrond. His Sindarin name was *Rodreth* (altered to *Orodreth* because of his love of the mountains .. ..... His children were Finduilas and Artanáro = Rodnor later called Gil-galad. (Their mother was a Sindarin lady of the North. She called her son Gil-galad.) Rodnor Gil-galad escaped and eventually came to Sirion's Mouth and was King of the Ñoldor there. (3)

Christopher Tolkien stated that his choice to retain Orodreth as the older brother of Angrod in the published *Silmarillion* had indeed been contrary to his father's final decision on how to

resolve the question of the identity of Orodreth and the related question of the paternity of Gil-galad.

There can be no doubt that this was my father's last word on this subject; but nothing of this late and radically altered conception even touched the existing narratives, and it was obviously impossible to introduce it into the published *Silmarillion*. It would nonetheless have been very much better to have left Gil-galad's parentage obscure. (4)

One must necessarily understand Christopher Tolkien's dilemma. While CT proved to his own satisfaction that his father had wanted to make these changes relating to Angrod, Orodreth, and Gil-galad, Tolkien had not written any of those alterations into the existing storyline. Therefore, they were not to be incorporated by Christopher Tolkien into the text of *The Silmarillion*, nor into the much later published book *The Children of Húrin*.

A further significant detail relating to Angrod is revealed in *The Shibboleth of Fëanor*: that of the existence of a wife. If Angrod is going to be the grandfather of Gil-galad, the last High King of the Noldor in Middle-earth, he will certainly need a wife.

The wife of *Angaráto* was named *Eldalótë*, and his son *Artaher*. . . Eðellos translated *Eldalótë* according to sense: 'Elven-flower'. *Angaráto* became naturally *Angrod*. (5)

Of *Eldalótë*, sometimes called *Eðellos*, one reads nothing in the published *Silmarillion*, which could lead one to believe that she did not follow her husband out of Aman. However, the existence of a Sindarin adaptation of her name could also indicate that she had come with her family to Beleriand. The possible grandmother of Gil-galad, unlike his mother, however, is honored among the unsung women of *The Silmarillion* in that she actually received a name.

It is in the published *Silmarillion* that Tolkien states that the four elves whom he names as the sons of Finarfin "were as close in friendship with the sons of Fingolfin as though they were all brothers" (6). This supposedly intimate relationship to Fingon and Turgon differs from earlier accounts of Angrod and his brother Aegnor, including that presented in *The Lost Road*, wherein they are reported to have been more devoted to the sons of Fëanor (7).

Angrod is the Sindarin name which *Angaráto* of Valinor adopted in Middle-earth. Like the name of his eldest brother *Findaráto* (Finrod), it is not a Quenyan name, but is Telerin. The form in Quenya of the name *Angaráto* would have been *Artanga* (8).

The names *Findaráto* and *Angaráto* were Telerin in form (for Finarfin spoke the language of his wife's people); and they proved easy to render into Sindarin in form and sense, because of the close relationship of the Telerin of Aman to the language of their kin, the Sindar of Beleriand, in spite of the great changes that it had undergone in Middle-earth. (9)

Angrod is further given an *epessë* (10) or nickname.

Angrod early developed hands of great strength and received the *epessë Angamaitë* 'iron-handed', so that *ang-* was used by Finarfin as a differentiating prefix. (11)

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Iron-handed is an interesting adjectival formulation in that it carries in most instances the negative connotation of despotic, dictatorial, oppressive, and/or tyrannical, which in the case of this character does not seem to be Tolkien's intention.

The initial mentions of Angrod in the published *Silmarillion* couple him with his brother Aegnor in recounting their movements early in the period of exile and their shared territory (12). Angrod is first referred to independently of Aegnor in *The Silmarillion* in the tale of his visit to Doriath. Having been chosen by his brother Finrod to travel as a representative of their family to make contact with their great uncle Elu Thingol, King of the Sindar (the brother of their grandfather Olwë, King of the Teleri at Alqualondë). Angrod arrives alone in Doriath and is welcomed by Thingol (13). A noteworthy aspect of that first encounter of any of the Noldorin princes with the reclusive king of the Sindar in Menegroth is that Angrod completely puts aside the kinslaying at Alqualondë and the other disturbing aspects of the exile of the Noldor.

. . . he spoke long with the King, telling him of the deeds of the Noldor in the north, and of their numbers, and of the ordering of their force; but being true, and wisehearted, and thinking all griefs now forgiven, he spoke no word concerning the kinslaying, nor of the manner of the exile of the Noldor and the oath of Fëanor. (14)

It is interesting that he assumes all of that is forgiven and has become unnecessary baggage, history. Thingol, however, although he is glad to meet the scions of his brother Olwë, is not pleased to think of so many powerful princes of the Noldor scattered throughout the north of Beleriand, which he considers to be his own territory. Thingol gives Angrod a message to take back to his siblings and cousins:

'Thus shall you speak for me to those that sent you. In Hithlum the Noldor have leave to dwell, and in the highlands of Dorthonion, and in the lands east of Doriath that are empty and wild; but elsewhere there are many of my people, and I would not have them restrained of their freedom, still less ousted from their homes. Beware therefore how you princes of the West bear yourselves; for I am the Lord of Beleriand, and all who seek to dwell there shall hear my word. Into Doriath none shall come to abide but only such as I call as guests, or who seek me in great need.' (15)

Angrod returns to the area of Mithrim, where Fingolfin calls a council of the princes of the Noldor. The implication is that Angrod tries to put a positive spin upon his meeting with the king of Doriath. When he reports the words of Thingol into that assemblage, his Noldorin kinsman fundamentally receive that message in the same spirit, one of mistrust and annoyance, in which it was given. Maedhros is dismissive of Thingol's authority noting that, "A king is he that can hold his own, or eke his title is vain. Thingol does but grant us lands where his power does not run." Short-tempered Caranthir, however, goes further and disrupts their meeting with an angry outburst:

'Yea more! Let not the sons of Finarfin run hither and thither with their tales to this Dark Elf in his caves! Who made them our spokesmen to deal with him? And though they be come indeed to Beleriand, let them not so swiftly forget that their father is a lord of the Noldor, though their mother be of other kin.' (16)

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Angrod, who leaves the council in anger at that point, does not forget Caranthir's attitude and sharp words. Inevitably with the passage of time rumors concerning the Noldorin princes and the circumstances of their abandonment of Aman began to reach Thingol, "and the evil truth was enhanced and poisoned by lies" (17). After receiving a report of such rumors from Círdan at the Havens, Thingol accuses Finrod, Galadriel and Angrod of hiding evil deeds from him; Finrod refuses to clear his own name by betraying his kinsmen. Angrod, however, still wroth with Caranthir for his angry words at the council in Mithrim and unwilling to bear the blame for misdeeds in which neither he nor his siblings had a part, tells all.

'Lord, I know not what lies you have heard, nor whence; but we came not red-handed. Guiltless we came forth, save maybe of folly, to listen to the words of fell Fëanor, and become as if besotted with wine, and as briefly. No evil did we do on our road, but suffered ourselves great wrong; and forgave it. For this we are named tale-bearers to you and treasonable to the Noldor: untruly as you know, for we have of our loyalty been silent before you, and thus earned your anger. But now these charges are no longer to be borne, and the truth yon shall know.'

Then Angrod spoke bitterly against the sons of Fëanor, telling of the blood at Alqualondë, and the Doom of Mandos, and the burning of the ships at Losgar. And he cried: 'Wherefore should we that endured the Grinding Ice bear the name of kinslayers and traitors?' (18)

Thingol outlaws even the use of the language of the exiled Noldor throughout Beleriand, saying,

Never again in my ears shall be heard the tongue of those who slew my kin in Alqualondë! Nor in all my realm shall it be openly spoken, while my power endures. All the Sindar shall hear my command that they shall neither speak with the tongue of the Noldor nor answer to it. And all such as use it shall be held slayers of kin and betrayers of kin unrepentant.' (19)

The result of Angrod's revelation of the whole truth about their flight and exile marks the end of a period of relative peace and reconciliation among the factions of the Noldor in Beleriand and, even more so, squashes any future hope of far-reaching collaboration with Thingol in the future in the ongoing struggle to defend the greater part of Beleriand against the incursion of Morgoth.

Then the sons of Finarfin departed from Menegroth with heavy hearts, perceiving how the words of Mandos would ever be made true, and that none of the Noldor that followed after Fëanor could escape from the shadow that lay upon his house. (20)

Angrod, of course, does not live to see the fulfillment of the Curse of Mandos, since he and his brother Aegnor are the first of the Noldorin princes, after Fëanor, to die in the Wars of Beleriand, in the conflagration of their territory by Morgoth's forces in the Dagor Bragollach (21).

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## Works Cited

1. *The Silmarillion, Index of Names.*
2. *The Peoples of Middle-earth, The Shibboleth of Fëanor.*
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. *The Silmarillion, "Of Eldamar and the Princes of the Eldalië."*
7. *The Lost Road and Other Writings, The Later Annals of Valinor.*
8. *The Peoples of Middle-earth, The Shibboleth of Fëanor.*
9. Ibid.
10. "In addition any of the Eldar might acquire an *epessë* ('after- name'), not necessarily given by their own kin, a nickname - mostly given as a title of admiration or honour." *The Peoples of Middle-earth, The Shibboleth of Fëanor.*
11. *The Peoples of Middle-earth, The Shibboleth of Fëanor.*
12. Silmarillion Writers Guild, [Character Biography of Aegnor](#).
13. *The Silmarillion, "Of the Return of the Noldor."*
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. *The Silmarillion, "Of the Ruin of Beleriand and the Fall of Fingolfin."*

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## About the Author

Oshun's *Silmarillion*-based stories may be found on the [SWG archive](#).